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NEWS DIGEST
OF THE I.A.R.F.

Geneva: famous centre of orthodoxy and liberalism

NEWS DIGEST OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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THE LIBERAL CONTRIBUTION TO INTER-FAITH CONTACTS

Everybody who has any insight into the complications of growing world unity is convinced that one of the important aspects of this development is a better understanding between the representatives of the great religions. For the greater part of the world population religion is the centre of their existence. Inter-faith contacts therefore can do much to bring the peoples of the world together. Misunderstanding, however, in this field can do just as much to keep peoples apart and make them hostile towards each other. Everybody also knows that there is not much time left. In the last century we already neglected many opportunities.

Our congress in Chicago under the theme "The World's Religions can meet the World's Needs Today" was in this respect an important experiment. I think we may say that we have experienced that a liberal platform provides a favourable atmosphere for meetings like these, in which representatives of different religions take part. Liberals take the view that God's revelation is not restricted to Christianity only, but that we can come together on the basis of mutual respect and the will to understand each other's point of view.

I presume, however, that many visitors will have become aware of a weak point in our movement in this field. We dearly want experience in meeting people of other faiths. Liberal theologians have done much to make their followers familiar with the principle that religion is a general human phenomenon, to be respected in every form in which we come across it. But this has become one of the leading principles in our movement mostly in the realm of study and reflection.

There are only a few liberals who in the field itself have met

Hindus, Moslems or Buddhists. The missionaries, to whose points of view many of us will often have objections, have far more experience of inter-faith contacts than the average liberal. Therefore, one of the first things liberals should do, if they want our movement to pay its contribution in this important field, is to organise and take part in inter-faith meetings. Next winter the Roman Catholic organisation "Pax Romana", with the help of Unesco funds, will organise a big meeting of this kind in Manila, Philippines. We should be very happy to receive reports from liberals taking part in this manifestation.

In Chicago it was decided that the IARF should proceed further on the road which the Congress had shown us. One of the plans which we have in mind is to organise a permanent study-centre. We hope that this winter inter-faith groups can be established in different parts of the world, that will provide us with the experience we need to make workable plans for a centre like this. A memorandum to this effect was put before the meeting of the IARF Executive Committee in July 1959 in Frankfurt-on-Main, Germany.

H. Faber

LIBERAL CONGRESS IN GENEVA

A liberal congress of French speaking churches has been organised by the Geneva section and held its sessions in this city from May 29 until June 1. It consisted of liberal representatives from France, Belgium, the French speaking Swiss cantons and from the Walloon churches in the Netherlands. The Executive Committee of the IARF was represented by Dr. H. Faber and the Central Committee of the Swiss Union for Liberal Christianity by Rev. Dr. Jacob Amstutz of Bern.

The congress was unanimously considered a success on account of the considerable numbers of participants in the public meetings and church service. There were also smaller meetings, where the theme discussed was whether a new Reformation is necessary.

The aim of the congress was to bring together liberals from French speaking countries and to convince them of the vitality of their movement on the occasion of the commemoration of Calvin's birth in 1509 and the foundation of Geneva university in 1559. This is why the congress went under the name of Jean-Alphonse Turrettini, who at the beginning of the 18th century advocated the abolition of the all too strong Calvinist principles, introducing at the same time even in the Church of Calvin regard for human conscience. Albert Schweitzer and Adlai Stevenson had agreed to sit on the Honorary Committee of the Congress.

André Siegfried, of the Académie Française was to have given the principal address. Following his death, about a month before the beginning of the congress, his place was taken by the Rev. Georges Marchal of Paris, who gave a brilliant public address about the forthcoming Roman Catholic ecumenical council and the Protestant standpoint.

The delegates of the Congress were officially received by the city government of Geneva. Rev. Dr. Henry Babel in a short address thanked the authorities and on Saturday night he spoke about the

development of the liberal movement from the days of Turrettini until the present time.

The delegates visited the hall in the ancient church where Calvin used to give his theological lectures, as well as the house of Turrettini. At the end of the Congress the following resolution was adopted:

The delegates to the Liberal Congress of French-speaking Protestant Churches, gathered together in Geneva from May 29th until June 1st 1959 for the commemoration of the birth of Calvin in 1509, have adopted the following resolution which they want to bring before the public:

"It is their conviction that one of the major causes of the danger which threatens the so-called Christian civilisation is the lack of adaptation of religions, and of the language and methods of churches, to the knowledge and the experience of man today. Many of our contemporaries have left the church not because of unbelief but because they want a Christianity which is rooted in the realities of the present-day world".

"Liberal Protestants pay tribute to the Reformers of the past and point out that a Reformation is now as necessary as it ever was in the past. The new Reformation should, however, not consist of a return to the past, but should review and bring up to date the doctrines and methods of the Church in accordance with the needs of our time."

"Especially in the Church of Geneva liberalism identifies itself with the tradition of the national Church itself which was the result of the continued reformations of the XVIIIth and XIXth century. The liberals of Geneva conscientiously want to remain true to this tradition whilst working for the necessary spiritual renovation."

"Protestant liberalism believes that faith and reason need not be self-exclusive but should mutually complement each other, and that the faith embodied in Christ aims to liberate people from bondage, superstitions and idol worship: God is Spirit and Life."

"Liberal Protestants suffer from the controversies between the churches. They point out that it was eminent representatives of their movement, Wilfred Monod and Nathan Söderblom, who acted as pioneers of the ecumenical movement. Today Christian unity cannot be reached by returning to the dogmas of the past. It is an alliance of the churches with respect for conscience and rightful differences of opinion."

"The liberal Protestants of the French speaking churches wholeheartedly take part in the life of the church in the spirit of Christ, and appeal to all men of good will to sustain their efforts "in order to maintain the unity of the spirit through the bonds of peace".

THE PROTESTANTS AND THE NEXT COUNCIL

On May 29th, 1959, the Geneva public came together in the "Salle de la Réformation" (seating 1700) to listen to an address by the Rev. Georges Marchal of Paris. His theme: "The Protestants and the Next Council" was surely a topic of the day and his speaking talent and his sound documentation, based on official texts, gave to this address its exceptional value. In the following account the main points which Mr. Marchal brought forward are given.
The papacy has the intention to call an Ecumenical Council to consider the unity of the Church, but unity as conceived by Rome is exclusively Roman unity. To consent to such a unity could only be of documentary interest, it might be unity, but it could never be community. It would be a bridge with only one-way traffic, without reciprocity. Why has papacy spoken at all? It feels that at present the Church is called to account. Christianity has never acquiesced in the divisions of the Church, its representatives, although longing for contact, always feel the problem of authority and freedom as an obstacle.
The first divisions of the Church were of a christological character, in which doctrines were used as weapons against heresy. In the 16th century it was the problem of authority which dominated and today it is that of office (ordination or charism?).
Confronted with the Ecumenical Movement, born in 1910 at the Conference in Edinburgh, between Protestants, orthodox as well as Anglicans, Rome has reconsidered its position and now addresses those who do not belong to her flock. The Ecumenical Movement only aims at a federalistic unity, whereas Rome wants a

monopolistic unity. It can meet the orthodox — who have episcopal ordination — at a round table conference (and what about the Anglicans?). The Protestants, taken as individuals, are considered Christians, but they are not members of a "Church", they are only dissenting brethren.

A church without ordination is no church in the eyes of Rome. Who sees here only the sect, thinks that he has the Truth and consequently the Roman Church is the largest of the sects.

Now here the obstacles to unity are coming to the fore. Pope John XXIII is sympathetic, well disposed, open to unity, but being infallible himself, he cannot disown his predecessors who were likewise infallible. Under these circumstances, how can unity be achieved? The Roman theologians inform us that there can only be unity by absorption. Will the Protestants be invited to the next Council? So far no definite answer has been given to this question. If they are invited they will have to turn down the invitation out of loyalty to themselves, because the conditions will be unacceptable, and they cannot agree to being treated as poor relatives. Moreover, papacy is in no way disposed to remove obstacles, such as mariology (incompatible with the biblical movement), Lourdes, Fatima, etc. which for Protestants are insurmountable barriers. And then the theology of mixed marriages, the right of the Church to take charge of the children which it has baptised (the Finaly case!), etc. In view of these facts the elements in favour of a rapprochement throw little weight in the balance, the scales remain heavily weighted on the side of Rome.

In conclusion we can say that the basic problem is that of authority, which Auguste Sabatier has severely criticised. In this connection one should remember that there are points on which the Ecumenical Movement would be wise to have second thoughts and revise its constitution. Its basic formula "To recognise Jesus Christ as God and Saviour", would make it possible for the Pope to join the Ecumenical Movement, whereas such scholars as Söderblom, Harnack or Schweitzer are excluded!

Part of Protestantism should re-learn the meaning of "liberty"! ...

From: "Evangile et Liberté".

THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF THE R. C. CHURCH

The announcement by the new Pope of an Ecumenical Council to be held in Rome has caused a lot of excitement. In an explanation given some time after the first announcement the Pope has brought the whole affair back to its right proportions. It will not be a council to which non-Roman-Catholics will also be invited, but merely an internal council of deliberations within the Roman Church itself, at which the ecumenical question will be the main object of discussion. Those who saw in this council a move of the Roman Church towards a reunion of all Christians forgot that, since the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope was formulated, councils like this have had an advisory function only. I myself see the importance of this council in the first place against the background of the situation within the Roman Church itself. The World Council of Churches — the non-Roman ecumenical organisation — is gradually building up relations with the orthodox churches in Eastern Europe, the part of the world where at the moment Rome is quickly losing its influence. Is not this council, proposed by the new Pope, an endeavour to renew contacts with these churches and to maintain a connection with men and peoples who in the coming years will exercise a decisive influence in the shaping of the future of mankind?

H. Faber

MEETING OF THE IARF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN FRANKFURT

The annual meeting of the Executive Committee of the IARF was held in Frankfurt am Main at the end of July 1959. Members of the Executive Committee and the Secretariat availed themselves of this opportunity to meet with representatives of different Liberal Christian and Liberal Religious groups in Germany.

Among the participants at the meeting of the Executive Committee was also the Rev. Imre Filep of Budapest who conveyed the greetings of the Hungarian Unitarians and thanked the Executive Committee and through them the members of the IARF for the tremendous assistance given to the Hungarian Unitarian congregations.

The Committee discussed in the first place the next Congress of IARF which will take place in Davos, Switzerland, in August 1961. It was agreed that the subject of the Congress should be in the field of the relations between the different World Religions, but should not be as wide as it was in Chicago. Professor Heiler proposed as the theme: "The Unity of Mankind in Eastern and Western View" which was tentatively accepted by the Committee. The Secretariat was asked to submit to the next meeting of the Executive Committee a detailed program of the Congress, based on a skeleton outline which was drawn up during the Frankfurt meetings by a small working group.

This detailed draft program will be drawn up in close cooperation with the Swiss member of the Executive Committee, the Rev. Walter Ammann, and the man who will be responsible for the local organisation in Davos, the Rev. Dr. Peter Dalbert.

The Executive Committee also paid considerable attention to the Inter Faith Program of IARF and its relations with UNESCO. It welcomed the establishment of Study Circles on Inter Faith Relations in the East and in the West and in addition emphasised that it would be useful to draw the man in the street into the

discussions by also enabling liberal congregations in different countries to set up discussion groups on this subject.
The Committee decided to assist the Unitarian Historical Society in its commemoration of the American Unitarian theologian Theodore Parker who died 100 years ago.
The financial situation of the Association is a source of increasing concern. It was felt that it is impossible for the Association to carry on in the same way and that the membergroups are bound to increase their contributions considerably if the organisation is to survive. In the course of the coming year the membergroups will therefore be approached with an urgent request to increase their contribution.
Further points of discussion were among others: the relation with the IRF, and with the International Union of Liberal Christian Women, the News Digest, and International Sunday.

SOUVENIR BOOK OF THE SIXTEENTH CONGRESS IN CHICAGO, 1958

The manuscript for the souvenir book of the Sixteenth Congress of the IARF held in Chicago, August, 1958, is now in the hands of the printers. It will be ready for distribution in late October. The book includes the addresses of the principal speakers which, through necessity, have been carefully abridged. It also includes in full the findings and resolutions of the panel-discussion groups and the Sunday morning sermon. The book includes chapters covering the special events of the Congress, such as dinners and luncheons, the candle-lighting service, the luncheon meeting of the International Union of Liberal Christian Women, the trip from Montreal to Chicago and the post-Congress tour. There is a chapter on impressions of the Congress written by voting delegates from all the membergroups who were represented in Chicago. The book also includes a new section on the history and purposes of the IARF and its membergroups. A complete list of all persons attending the Congress together with their addresses has been included, as well as a section of photographs. The cost of the book will be approximately $ 3.00 in the United States and 10/6 abroad for all orders in hand by October 15, 1959; after that date the price may need to be increased.
Orders may be sent direct to the IARF. Book Committee, 25 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Mass., USA; the IARF. Headquarters, 32 Riouwstraat, The Hague, Holland; or The Lindsey Press, Essex Hall, 1/6 Essex Street, Strand, London W.C. 2, England.

FROM THE MEMBERGROUPS

France-Obituary

ANDRE SIEGFRIED

On March 31st we have accompanied André Siegfried to his last resting place. After a service, held in the intimacy of the home, we have bade him a last farewell at the cemetery of Passy, where some two hundred people had gathered spontaneously.

In his person an eminent representative of universal humanism and protestant thought has gone. One could say that he has lived his own legend, for his name had become a synonym — for more than one generation — of intellectual mastership, great culture, incessant instruction and exacting conscience.

Firmly Protestant, through a strong family tradition, André Siegfried has in all his work rethought his religious heritage. He has, so to say, re-chosen Protestantism. Every tradition, how venerable it might be, was suspect to him if it had not been subjected to strict examination. In the heritage of the Reformation two elements seemed essential to him: respect for liberty and the purity of the religious sentiment itself.

On the first point Siegfried has never faltered. At a memorable session of the "Académie Française" he didn't hesitate to present, in very clear terms, a fundamental criticism of the Roman conception of authority. The nuncio and the cardinal who were present could not, in their hearts, but give homage to the loyalty of a man who, on the other hand, had spoken equally well of one of the greatest of Roman Catholic authors.

As to the second point, purity, André Siegfried gave thanks to the Reformers who, in spite of their limited success, had tried to keep faith distinct from all that did not really belong to it — ritual, dogmatism, myth and even morality. Theologically Siegfried owed much to Sabatier, Schweitzer and, quite recently, Bultmann, whom

he had come to know quite well. He was one of the great "Libéraux", the more so as theological controversy was alien to his nature.

We will keep his memory in high and grateful esteem,

From: Evangile et Liberté, April, 1959.

U.S.A.-NEW MEMBERGROUP

The GREEN STREET MONTHLY MEETING is situated about eight miles from the center of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., in a historical suburban district known as Germantown. The name of the Meeting comes from the original Meeting House at Fourth and Green Streets in old Philadelphia, where a stone in the west gable gives the date 1813.

The first Green Street Meeting House in Germantown was erected in 1829 and was supplanted by a new building completed in 1854; remodeled in 1915, and later an addition was added with a dining room and kitchen for social affairs of the Meeting and for the children of the school. A private girls' school under the care of the Meeting is on the Meeting grounds.

The exterior of the Meeting House is a cream coloured stucco and the interior is without ornament or religious symbols. In the front are two rows of facing benches, one of which is raised slightly. A large attractive fireplace is situated in the centre of these.

The present membership is 415 adults and 87 children. A number of the adults are not residents of this area.

We have the following committees to carry on the work of the Meeting:

(1) The committee on Worship and Ministry whose function is to give continuing thought to the religious life of the Meeting for Worship and of its individual members and attenders.

(2) Pastoral care of the membership is the responsibility of the Overseers who should take a personal interest in the spiritual and temporal welfare of each individual member of the Monthly Meeting.

(3) A Community Relations Committee seeks to forward our concern for the proper social and economic relationships in our civic responsibilities.

(4) A Peace Committee encourages our belief in human brotherhood and maintenance of our testimony against war and all that is related thereto.

(5) The officers of the Meeting are Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer and Recorder.

As an indication of our cooperation with other religious groups, we are members of the Philadelphia Council of Churches. The spirit which animated our desire to join the IARF is in accord with John Woolman, the early American Quaker, who wrote: "There is a principle that is pure, placed in the human mind, which in various ages and places hath had different names. It is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no form of religion nor excluded from any, where the heart stands in perfect simplicity. In whomsoever this principle takes root and grows, of what nation soever, they become brethern in the best sense of the term."

Esther Holmes Jones

BRITISH DELEGATES' RE-UNION IN LONDON

A year ago the English delegates to the 16th IARF Congress in Chicago were looking ahead to what they all knew would be an exciting experience. For all of us our Transatlantic trip turned out to be an unforgettable thrill, and for the majority of us it was also a unique one. Few of us go to America every year! Even for those lucky enough to be able to travel to America often, it must always be a particular exciting journey — from Old Europe to that New World, which looms so large in our hopes and our concerns for the future.

For us English Unitarians our memories of America are a very present tonic in time of trouble. In a country so indifferent as England is to organized religion, we have a hard struggle to preserve our church traditions. In America, as we quickly found, the story is one of rich prosperity and amazing progress for all denominations. Everywhere we visited we heard the same story of new congregations founded, new church buildings and ever novel enterprise.

During the first weekend of April this year, through the initiative of the Rev. John Kielty, a reunion of the English delegates to the Chicago Congress was held in London, in the new headquarters building of the Unitarian movement, Essex Hall, off the Strand not far from the River Thames. There had been a most encouraging response to the invitation to attend this reunion, which was indeed the first of its kind. Usually, after IARF Congresses, the English delegates disperse to the four corners of Great Britain. Although individual delegates often have occasion to meet and are able to talk over their experiences in a personal way, for most of us the IARF itself is usually either associated with a Con-

gress just held or one that is more or less remotely in prospect. This reunion of our English party to America made us feel the need of holding more frequent IARF meetings of our own. Among our personal subscribers, not all of whom of course attend congresses, the IARF tends to have a rather vague status. People subscribe to it out of goodwill, but unless they have been to a Congress, it is often little more than a name.

The reunion in London was highly successful, thanks both to the excellent arrangements made by Mr. Kielty and to the contributions to the programme made by those attending. One of the Committee rooms at Essex Hall was turned into a miniature cinema and we were able to see the coloured slides that many of the delegates had taken of their Transatlantic journeys. Many of these were remarkably good and superbly revived our American memories. People and places we all remembered brought forth cries of delight when we saw them projected on the screen and we felt that we were transported back to America. The running commentaries on the slides were also most interesting, for the speakers frequently gave voice to our own impressions and recollections. Several sessions were devoted to showing slides. One or two menbers of our English party had been as far West as California and British Columbia. The variety of the pictures showed can be imagined.

We were delighted that at some of our meetings both Mr. Chuter Ede and the Rev. Stewart Carter were able to be present. Mr. Chuter Ede in particular gave us some interesting side-lights on the preparations for the Congress, for as the President at the time he was able to see (and say!) much more than we ordinary delegates could. As usual with him, his comments on his experiences were deficient in neither wisdom nor humour. Mr. Chuter Ede is an adornment to any gathering and we felt extremely lucky that he could join in our reunion.

Inevitably we wondered what we should do next. We certainly felt that English people interested in the IARF should have an opportunity of meeting together, though there were obvious difficulties in view of the scattered nature of our English membership. We took the opportunity of discussing this problem and finally decided to press the General Assembly of our English churches to invite the Executive Committee of the IARF to meet in England, whenever it can conveniently do so, so that some sort of encounter can be arranged between it and our English subscribers. Mr. Kielty undertook to see that this suggestion was brought before the Council of our Unitarian Assembly, and we gathered that it had a good chance of being approved.

If something interesting and useful can be worked out, such an

encounter between members of the Executive and ordinary English subscribers will give us an excellent chance of introducing others to the important work of our international organization and of inducing them to share its concerns. In all countries the IARF certainly needs not only more personal subscribers, but also more personal meetings at which interest in its work can be kindled and encouraged. With so much waiting to be done in the field of liberal religion we cannot be content with the printed word or congresses held at long intervals.

Rev. A. B. Downing,
Wilmslow, Cheshire, England

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF LIBERAL CHRISTIAN WOMEN

As an Associate Member Group of the IARF the International Union of Liberal Christian Women was invited to take part in a Seminar arranged by Unesco from April 5th to 17th, 1959, in the neighbourhood of London, on the Methods and Techniques of Adult Education in Women's International Organisations. It was the first Seminar Unesco had held for women's organisations and women only; for the International Union it was also a landmark in our history, as it was the first time we have been invited to participate in anything arranged by Unesco.

We were asked to send delegates concerned with the running of our organisation, as one of the main aims of the Seminar was the sharing of our experience and pooling of our ideas, so that we might know what was going on in other women's international organisations, and adopt and adapt useful ideas for group work. Our President, Rev. Dr. Cornelia Boer came over from Arnhem to attend, and the other representative was the Union secretary. There were 42 delegates, representing 21 international women's organisations, and in all 17 countries were represented.

It was an interesting cross-section of women's interests, including societies concerned with religious, social, economic and political interests. There were University Women, Business and Professional Women, Women Lawyers, Countrywomen of the World; there were also international trade unions, Workers' Educational Associaton, and other similar bodies. On the religious side there were three Roman Catholic Women's Organisations; for Protestants, one member of the Commission of the World Council of Churches, three from the Y.W.C.A. (from America, India, and Great Britain), and the International Union of Liberal Christian Women.

Religion, however, was not discussed, nor, remarkable as it may sound, did politics come into conversation or discussion. With such a mixture of interests all felt that we should stick to our common interest in education; with women there from all over the world, many with much experience in international gatherings, the lively talk over meals never flagged. The Seminar was held at a training college at Twickenham by the river Thames, a lovely setting for a residential Seminar.

After a formal opening by Miss Patricia Hornsby-Smith on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, and a welcome from the Chairman of the United Kingdom Committee of Unesco's Adult Education, a message was read from the Director General of Unesco. Then we got down to work on a number of lectures followed by discussion on such subjects as National and International Institutions of education, traditional and active methods in use, visual aids, radio and television, correspondence and discussion group work and trade union education. For the lectures and plenary sessions the hall was arranged for simultaneous translations, in French and English, the two languages in official use.

Much of our time was spent in three discussion groups, from which reports were made by members in turn to full sessions, followed by more discussion. Some group discussion times were left free, and these proved very valuable for pursuit of wider knowledge and exchange of ideas and experiences. No definite resolutions were sent in, but we all felt we had gained much valuable insight into the educational problems of other countries; keen interest was shown in the work being carried on in underdeveloped countries, such as India, Egypt, parts of Africa, South America, and in the work Unesco is doing in spreading information and helping medical, social and economic progress. The art of lecturing, the use of books, practical and visual aids came in for profitable discussion; again and again we came back to the importance of good teachers and their training, the development of the individual, and the need for training in creative work.

Outside excursions included a reception by the Mayor of Twickenham and the Women Citizens' Association, meeting prominent British Educationalists, a visit to a college for Working Women, and participation in a television programme, though questions on nuclear weapons and the use of force raised here could only receive a very superficial treatment in the short time allowed.

Many, in fact most of our groups in the International Union of Liberal Christian Women are already using the most modern methods in group work, and take a keen interest in international problems in the social and economic as well as the religious field.

Our participation in IARF conferences has helped to increase our international interests and friendships, and while our numbers were smaller than some of the organisations represented at Twickenham, we felt that we were a live body and had a contribution to make to such meetings and to international work.

M. K. Garry

THE UNITARIAN COMMUNITY IN BERLIN

Already as a student I felt the need of a liberal Church in Berlin, which had so many liberal Professors but no liberal congregation. In the time of Hitler it was impossible to establish a Unitarian congregation, but in 1945 after my return from Russian captivity I could begin to consider the founding of a Unitarian community. At first we were not allowed to keep meetings, but in 1949 I succeeded in bringing together a number of interested people who were addressed by the Rev. Dr. Edwin C. Broome who at that time was the leader of the Department of Religious Affairs of the American Authorities in Berlin. However, this effort and also my second try, both failed. Miss Helen Fogg, Director of the Unitarian Service Committee, who at that time was head of a Social Mission in Berlin, found me in despair. It was only in 1950 that I succeeded in founding our 'Unitarische Gesellschaft, Berlin' which at present has 150 members and of which I am the minister. I would have preferred not to mention myself in this respect but this would have given a wrong impression because up to the present my congregation depends on me not only for the ministry, but also for its housing and financial support. It is true that we have been recognised by the State as a Religious Community and we are also a member of the official 'Community of Churches in Great Berlin', but we do not have the rights and privileges of the two great churches for whom the State authorities collect taxes. Nearly everybody in Berlin who has an income, whether he is a member of a church or not, pays church-taxes. Even those who in their heart of hearts reject the Church are afraid officially to discontinue their churchmembership, which in our country needs a legal procedure and may impair their — or their children's — chances of obtaining any official job. But those who have to pay church-taxes often declare themselves unable to pay additional high contributions to our Unitarian Community and only pay a small fee. This is what causes our financial plight in which we stand quite alone because other religious communities who do not

belong to an official German church all receive contributions from their foreign mother churches.

Notwithstanding the above mentioned difficulties we have during the last 9 years been able to develop a real community-life. Our religious services which take place in the beautiful meeting house of the Quakers — at a fee — are in good style. Our Unitarian 'Club' which serves to establish brotherly contacts between members, is a new kind of institution. Moreover we radiate our influence to such a world-wide extent that it may be called exemplary for such a small community. Berlin is a city in the focus of world interest. After an article by Dr. Broome in the Unitarian Register in March 1950, which drew the attention to our congregation, letters have reached us in increasing numbers from all over the world. We also established contacts with English Unitarianism and with the IARF. All correspondents expressed their interest in our work. Our replies have gone not only to the Western world but to Eastern friends as well and to all parts of the world, except Asia. During the travelling season visitors come from many sides. Among those have been representatives of the IARF such as Professor Dr. F. Buri, Dr. S. van der Woude and the Rev. Edw. A. Cahill. There has also been a re-union with Dr. Broome who visited us on his return from Palestine and gave a sermon in the German language in the Student's Hostel of the Technical University. Among those present was also the leader of the Department of Religious Affairs. Authors send us their books, the important American preacher Dr. Powell Davies used to send us copies of his sermons. Such communications save us from isolation and spiritual narrowness. In the mosaïc of the IARF we are only a very small stone, but we do belong in the picture. However, in order to establish a place for ourselves in the metropolis Berlin we need, cramped as we are between the two big state churches, without a press of our own, much patience. A decade is not sufficient to reach this goal. Thousands who spiritually belong to us, have no idea of the meaning of 'unitarian' and often confuse it with 'united'. Young theologians again and again show interest for the ministry in our congregation, but it will be a long time till we are in a position to pay a minister's salary. We believe, however, that here at the meeting point of East and West we are doing for Unitarianism and Liberal Christianity what is possible. Strengthened by the understanding of the Executive Committee of the IARF which received me as its guest on July 25, 1959, in Frankfurt, I returned to Berlin to continue my work by marrying a young couple who have both a teaching post at the University.

Dr. Rud. Kürschner

BOOKNEWS

'Basler Bekenntnis heute', Dr. F. Buri, Evangelischer Verlag A. G. Zollikon, 1959, 124 pp.

Buri has chosen to have this book published by Karl Barth's publisher. In a loose sheet, enclosed in the book, the editor explains that this contribution by an author who for many years has been one of the leading figures in Liberal Protestantism can now be welcomed by this publishing firm. 'Buri has learned from Barth' he says. . . .

In this publication Buri has taken as his starting point the Basle Confession of 1534. This consists of 12 articles in which an explanation is given of the reformatory creed. Buri now wants to give expression to his own belief, based on this old confession. Simply to return to the standpoint of the fathers is impossible (p. 18). On the other hand, however, he will have nothing to do with the kind of preaching in which man is considered naturally good and which sees the progress of humankind as the good message. The world and life are more abysmal than former generations have known. Our generation has attained a renewed understanding of the harsh word about the depravity of the world. The fathers also had this understanding and taking this common basis as a starting point we can confess our common Christian faith. There is much which we will express in other words. Our civilisation is not the same as theirs. Our standpoint as regards nature and history has undergone radical changes. The old Basle Confession is like an old map of the world. The world and history are clearly discernible here; there is a beginning — the creation of the world — and an end — the day of doom. There is a centre: Christ. A world above: that is to say God and his throne and a world below: the earth. There is traffic between the upper and the lower stories of the world-building, Christ's Ascension and his return (p. 59).

In his present publication Buri tries to give an existential ex-

planation of these old pictures. Trinity, predestination, creation, resurrection, ascension, return, all are symbols, giving expression to that which rules and penetrates our actual humanity in its relation to God.

As an example of the way he treats the statements of the Confession let me take what he says about the Resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of Man on the Day of Judgement. After briefly indicating the problems to be noticed with regard to the empty grave and to the resurrection of Man for the Last Judgement, Buri points to St. John 5:24-27. This Gospel, he says, frees us from all difficulties and problems which loom up when we break our heads over what happened at Jesus' resurrection and how it will be at our resurrection. These questions are no longer relevant, the only thing that is — and may be and must be important now — is whether we hear the word of the resurrection and believe it, that is to say whether we see ourselves in the light of this word and whether we live by it. Likewise as this eternal life has come to us in Jesus, who confronts us with this message of eternal life, with the possibility of winning or losing it, so now, according as we hear and understand this message in the right way, judgement is meted out to us for life or doom. Therefore we need not worry how Jesus once rose from the grave or how the dead will rise from theirs at the Last Judgement, but from our life *now* we have direct access to the understanding of this message, and it proves already in this life to us its victorious power over the power of death (p. 105). In this way Buri here gives us a 'theology of existence'. There is much in it which we can appreciate. There are large liberal circles where 19th century optimism has been abandoned and much of what Buri offers can, in its essence, certainly be the expression of the belief of many people from these circles.

But when reading this booklet one is tempted to ask why Buri has in this publication adapted himself so strongly to the traditional formulae. Up to now we have been used to this way of speaking from Hegelian theologians. In Holland there have been Hegelian theologians who preached in such a traditional way that strictly orthodox churchgoers were quite unsuspicious. We should ask the question whether this way of speaking should not be reserved solely for traditional circles? Is it really a way of making contact with the great many modern people for whom expressions like election, resurrection, ascension, return, etc. only act as deterrents?

Is it not true that we as Christians have to belong completely to our own time and should try to spread the Christians message in such words as are least susceptible to misunderstanding? Let me

take again the resurrection. In Buri's publication the issue is community with Christ; Christ is the revelation of Transcendence in such a way that in him the agapê, the searching and forgiving love comes to meet us. Why not say this in simple words as the centre of the message? Why bother with the whole traditional decoration?

We get the impression that Buri feels the need to attach his theology of existence to a perfect and definite revelation which is said to have occurred in history, namely in Christ. Christ is God on earth, God in human form (p. 45). Before and around Christ all is darkness. Emphatically we are told again and again that Christ is 'truly God', is 'without sin', 'the centre of the divine plan for the world'. (For that matter we wonder how Buri is going to bear this out in his Dogmatics).

From here it becomes more easily understandable how Buri fearlessly uses mythical categories for the 'description' of what happened to the God on earth. Going on in this way it becomes understandable that Buri with obvious sympathy speaks time and again about 'the Holy Trinity'. He suggests that the New Testament is already trinitarian. On page 28 we read that 'the apostle (Paul) speaks of the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost'. The apostles have not yet thought it necessary to set up and develop a doctrine of the Trinity, as the Church did later on'. Buri finishes this chapter by citing a hymn to the triune God, in the same way as previously he had quoted with approval the old church hymn: 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost in one Throne'. It seems therefore that Buri wants to bind the Church once more to those unhappy formulae, which again and again give rise to the almost inevitable semblance of tri-theism. In order to glorify the 'Triune God' Buri does not shrink from grossly unfair sayings. The gods of the antique world are simply pushed aside with Paul's term 'dumb idols'. Buri does not take into account the possibility that Transcendence in the centuries before Christ may have used these symbols to enlighten and strengthen people. It becomes still worse when Buri calls the God of Israel 'in the last instance a hidden God'. For this he quotes Isaiah 45:15 'Truly, Thou art a God who hidest thyself'. But when reading this chapter one will see that this was said by the Ethiopians, Egyptians and Sabines who were led as prisoners to Israel. And the prophet lets Jehova reply: "I have not spoken in secret, in dark places of the earth. I said not unto the seed of Jacob: Seek ye me in vain. I, the Lord, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right."

The question of a possibly positive value of the great world religions does not come up at all. We are sorry we can only see this

as a dogmatic apriorism. How much more to the point, matter of fact and open is the treatment of this problem for example by Neuenschwander (Glaube pp 250-253).

In one instance this dogmatic apriorism acquires a tinge of clericalism. On p. 111 Buri speaks about modern psycho-therapy. He is right in saying: 'as a science psychiatry does not acknowledge the idea of sin'. Later on, however, he tries to give the impression that for psychiatrists everything now is 'relative, understandable, excusable'. That would mean that those psychiatrists overstep their scientific competence. No doubt there are such psychiatrists but it is unfair in this way to generalise psycho-therapeutic practices as a whole and from this judgement to make capital for the benefit of pastoral care.

To sum up, we must say that this publication — notwithstanding its author's accomplishments — misses a very important element, namely spiritual openness. Buri has given here a clever piece of construction: with the help of the categories of existentialism he has restored as with cement and concrete the complete Christian tradition as it was re-formulated during the Reformation and which in the following centuries has decayed. The structure is standing up again — but its style is that of a bygone era. This is not the kind of dogmatics we are waiting for. . . .

Martin Werner 'Glaube und Aberglaube', Verlag Paul Haupt, Bern-Stuttgart, 251 pp.

This book was presented to Professor Werner, the well-known Swiss professor of theology at Berne University, by his friends on the occasion of his 70th birthday. It contains a number of his articles and lectures. For many years Werner has been one of the leaders of the liberal movement in Switzerland and this book gives a good picture of his work and ideas. One of his friends, Paul Marti, has contributed a good biography and a personal letter from Albert Schweitzer is also published in the book. I hope this volume will find a number of readers outside Switzerland too.

Dr. K. H. Roessingh, 'De godsdienstwijsgerige problematiek in het denken van Martin Heidegger', ed. van Gorcum & Comp., Assen, Holland, 225 pp.

This book by one of the young liberal theologians in Holland tries to analyse the work of the famous German philosopher from the point of view of its value for a religious philosophy. He gives a good survey of the development in the thinking of Heidegger and tries to show some lines, which point to the future. He gives a good insight into the actuality of this philosophy, although it seems to be rather abstract.

Dr. J. M. de Jong, 'Kerygma', ed. van Gorcum & Comp. Assen, 346 pp.

This book tries to analyse the presuppositions in the theology of Rudolf Bultmann. It is up to the present the best introduction to the work of the well-known German New-Testament scholar published in Holland. Dr. de Jong belongs to the right-wing of the liberal movement in Holland and has through his work at the Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church many connections with the orthodox part of this Church. This book is a good example of the theological ideas which are to the found among the younger generation of right-wing Modernists in Holland.

Jakob Amstutz, 'Vierzig Briefe über christliche Lehre', ed. Verlag Paul Haupt, Bern-Stuttgart, 134 pp.

Jakob Amstutz, the Swiss minister, whom many of his friends appreciate for his fine spiritual qualities, publishes in this book a correspondence with a friend, which first appeared in the 'Schweizerische Reformierte Volksblatt' as an endeavour to sum up the contents of (liberal) Christianity. Well worth reading on account of the original way in which he puts forward his ideas.

Henry Babel, 'Jean Calvin, raconté à notre temps', publié par l'Association pour l'Eglise Nationale Protestante ouverte, à l'occasion du Jubilé calvinien, 52 pp.

In this little booklet, published on the occasion of the Calvin Jubilee of this year the Geneva minister offers his contribution to this commemoration. He shows how the liberals of Geneva honour the great Reformer, but how they also have their own views concerning the continuation of his Reformation.

Prof. Paul Tillich, 'Liefde, Macht en Recht', ed. W. Gaade N.V., Delft, 143 pp.

This is a Dutch translation of Tillich's 'Love, Power and Justice'. Tillich's work is well known in Holland at the moment.

F. van der Wissel, 'Ondogmatische Geloofsbeschouwingen', ed. De Tijdstroom, Lochem, 58 pp.

The Dutch Mennonites have an old tradition of undogmatic Christianity. This booklet of an older Mennonite minister is an example of the spirit in which many of his fellow-Mennonites speak about the great truths of their faith.

James Luther Adams, 'Taking Time Seriously', ed. The Free Press, Glencoe, III. 72 pp.

As Professor Adams left Chicago to take a post at Harvard University, some of his friends wanted to make a collection of a part of his writings. This booklet contains only five of them, but they give — as the editor puts it — 'some of the kindliness, the strength, the courage, the crusading spirit, the scholarly insights and the religious depth of Professor Adams', whom many outside the United States honour as one of the best examples of a liberal believer on that great continent.

'Die frei-religiöse Bewegung, Wesen und Auftrag", 377 pp.

One of the aspects of German religious life is the 'Bund Freireligiöser Gemeinden Deutschlands' ('Union of Free Religious Congregations in Germany') which commemorated its centenary in 1959. It is a movement outside the official churches and it publishes in this book a survey of its history, ideas and work. We get an impression of a movement with a definite tradition, which after the work of its founder, Johannes Ronge, has known many 'waves', and which under the wide conception of the idea 'religion' comprises a great variety of aspects but with one leading intention. For people who seek knowledge of this typically German movement, this is the book to be recommended.

Radhakrishnan. 'Recovery of Faith', George Allen & Unwin. London, 205 pp.

In the ambitious series 'World Perspectives', which tries to give fresh visions of outstanding scholars and scientists on the central problems of our age, this well-known philosopher writes about the problem of religion in our time. The meeting of the great religions is getting more concrete every year and in this meeting this book may play a certain role. It tries to break through dogmatic and sectarian differences and to give the author's view on a spiritual religion. Whether he is able to speak the last word on this issue seems doubtful, but his proposition is certainly worth thorough discussion.

George Peyrot, 'Religious Liberty and Conditions of Evangelical People in Italy', ed. by the Federal Council of Evangelical Churches in Italy, 31 pp.

This booklet gives a good idea of the conditions under which Protestants in Italy are obliged to live and work. It shows clearly the important parts of the Constitution pertaining to religion in

Italy, a publication which should be read by all who are interested in the problems of religious liberty in our time.

Arnold J. Toynbee, 'An Historian's Approach to Religion', Oxford University Press, 297 pp.

Toynbee's important point of view in this book is that the meeting of the great religions cannot be seen as a discussion on differences of doctrine only, but that it takes place in a world which every year becomes more 'westernised'. He clearly sees the problems which are involved in this. Not everyone will agree with his philosophical points of view, but it is certain that his historian's approach is of fundamental value.

'Orientatie'. A series of Remonstrant publications, ed. De Tijdstroom, Lochem, Holland.

Of this series of publications of the Remonstrant Brotherhood (one of the important member groups of the IARF in Holland) we have received two issues, one devoted to the theological work of Prof. G. J. Heering, one of the men who had a great influence on the development of the liberal movement in Holland on account of his right-wing Modernism between the two world wars. The other is by Dr. J. F. van Royen, a well-known Remonstrant minister in Rotterdam on 'Figure and Function of the Congregation in Modern Civilisation', a study of the problems involved in the work of a minister in a modern community.

Tracy M. Pullman, D.D., 'Liberalism is still the Answer'.

The Church of Our Father in Detroit, USA, has published the extracts of a number of sermons by its minister. A good example of liberal preaching in America, especially for Europeans worth reading.

Lester Mondale, 'Values in World Religions', Starr King Press, Boston, 105 pp.

This book is a study — as the writer puts it — of what each religion does in the living world of human beings as each one seeks his destiny and the meaning behind his existence, facing human fears and human joys and trying to earn a living. It sees as the idea of all religions an ethical religion which it tries to describe in the last chapter. The author is at the moment the leader of the Philadelphia Ethical Society. This book has in this way its own approach to the problems of the meeting of the great religions, an approach which certainly should be studied care-

fully. The only question is whether this vast field of problems can be covered by such a rather one-sided approach. We must have contributions from more sources before we can sum up the possibilities which are involved.

Sidney Spencer, 'Christian Doctrines Reconsidered' (Harry Bullock Memorial Lecture), published by the Union of Modern Free Churchmen.

In this booklet the author, the former Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, and lecturer in the Philosophy of Religion and Comparative Religion, tries to understand as a modern theologian the old Christian doctrines, such as those of the Incarnation, Forgiveness of Sins, and the Atonement, Salvation and the Sacraments, the Holy Catholic Church, the Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting. The clear style expresses clear thought. For everyone who wants to understand these doctrines without foresaking his liberal principles, this lecture gives an excellent introduction.

L. A. Garrard, 'The Historical Jesus' (the Essex Hall Lecture 1956), Lindsey Press, London, 2s.

This lecture provides very stimulating reading. It is at the same time a careful account of the consequences of the famous book by Albert Schweitzer: 'The Quest of the Historical Jesus', published in 1906, and a plea to continue this quest, which is not without hope. 'Even Bultmann assures us that in disentangling the earlier layers of the tradition from the later, we are not — as it were — peeling an onion, of which nothing will be left as we cast off shred after shred, but rather, as with an apple, coming nearer and nearer to a solid core', says the writer. In his opinion Schweitzer's book has made it clear that the quest of the historical Jesus is a difficult and perilous undertaking, but it has not been shown that it is futile or impossible. Historical negativism and defeatism have had their time. The writer acknowledges that the results of the quest of the historical Jesus with regard to his life and personality, are disappointingly meagre, but the quest has to go on 'for more than any other religion, Christianity is dependent upon honest historical research. It is not as a philosophy or as a code of morals that Christianity survived or can hope to survive. It is because it tells of a man who appeared at a specific moment of history and brought, and still brings, a challenge to accept or to refuse his conception of human destiny'. But can we loosen this 'conception of human destiny' from the claims Jesus made for Himself and is

therefore the last sentence of the lecture true: 'The supreme affirmation of Christian discipleship is not 'I believe', but 'I follow'? Or are we to say that faith in Him and discipleship are unseparably linked together?

A. Philip Hewett, 'An Unfettered Faith', Lindsey Press, London, 1955, 7s.6d.

If the common observation among Unitarians that there are a great many people who are 'Unitarians without knowing it' is true, here is a book for them, as far as they are willing to use their minds in order to follow the train of thought of the author. The book gives an insight into fundamental ideas and principles of faith in general and Unitarianism specifically. Eight chapters deal with knowledge, faith and faiths; modern types of faith; unitarian principles; the thought of the divine; miracles and revelation; man's nature and destiny; our heritage from the past; unitarian practice, ends and means. The book could also serve very well as a manual for discussion groups.

Mortimer Rowe 'The Story of Essex Hall'. Lindsey Press, London, 1959, 84 pages, 7/6 shilling.

The former secretary of the British Unitarians writes in this booklet, that comes out on the moment of the opening of the new Essex Hall in London, the history of the past Hall. It is a very interesting piece of British Church History, nicely illustrated, and it gives in a second part a good survey of the building and the opening of the new one.

WE READ FOR YOU:

Professor Heiler has returned from the Far East

Professor Dr. D. Fr. Heiler of Marburg University in Germany, where he teaches Comparative Religion and the Philosophy of Religion and is at the same time the leader of the famous 'Religionskundliche Sammlung' (Scientific Religious Assembly) in Marburg Castle, has travelled for several months in Eastern Asia and has now returned home. Last year Professor Heiler — and also Professor Gustav Mensching of Bonn University, took part in the Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions in Tokyo, Japan. After the congress he stayed in Japan for several months, giving lectures and visiting Buddhist and Shintoist sects and Christian churches.

From there he went on to Hongkong and then to Java, Bangkok, Rangoon and Calcutta. He also stayed in Nepal for some time. Lastly he visited Pakistan and Ceylon. About all these places he speaks with the greatest enthusiasm. Especially Indonesia is rich in giant buildings and other signs of old lofty religions.
In his studies Professor Heiler has not only occupied himself with Pagodas or even ruins, his main interest was in the forms of life of *living* religions. He went into Buddhist lamaseries and Jewish synagogues, as well as Christian churches.
Moreover, he always kept his eyes open for possibilities of enriching the Marburg collection through the purchase of new items. Among his acquisitions are Buddha-figures, Boddhisattvas, other idols, ancestor-tablets, priestly garments, holy vessels of all descriptions, chalices, books and, by no means least in importance, models of cultural buildings. Prof. Heiler is also a member of the Executive Committee of the IARF.

From: 'Freies Christentum'.

Horwich: Most churches are experienced in organising conventional money-raising events such as dances, whist drives, jumble sales and coffee evenings, but Horwich Unitarian Free Church, in addition to this sort of activity, strives occasionally for the unusual. Two years ago a mongrel-dog show, arranged in conjunction with the R.S.P.C.A. proved a big success, to be quickly followed by a sensational Backyard Party, put on by the Minister, the Rev. Joyce Hazelhurst, and colleague Miss Ada Hesketh, in their backyard. More recently the church secretary, Mrs. Olive Boyes began what has rapidly become a popular Monday-Evening event in town, a Ladies Keep-Fit Class, which was recognised last month when Mrs. Boyes was guest of TV Keep-Fit expert Eileen Fowler at a London course.
The class recently presented a display to a packed schoolroom. Then the Women's League threw a Farmhouse Supper at which a Dairy Queen was elected. Now Miss Hazelhurst las launched an eight-week course of lessons in public speaking which is attracting good support from church members and the public.

From: 'The Inquirer'

Death takes a Genius. Frank Lloyd Wright, a man whose genius influenced architecture throughout the world, died April 19, 1959, in Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Wright was born June 8, 1869, son of a Welsh Unitarian minister. He was an Honorary Member of the Unitarian Laymen's League.
He was responsible for the design of some of the most famous and revolutionary buildings in the world: the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, the Robie House in Chicago, his home, 'Taliesin East' near

Spring Green, Wisconsin; and the nearly completed Guggenheim Museum in New York City.

At his death he was America's, possibly the world's, most celebrated architect. He had received awards from eight nations and had been given gold medals by the King of England and the American Institute of Architecture.

But with the world's accolades went the world's scorn. His ideas were attacked as egotistical, impractical, and his buildings have been called 'monstrosities of material and form'.

His private life was subject to strife, crippling debt, and tragedy. His defiance of convention attracted sensational publication. But he answered his critics as he explained to one of his sons: 'The faith that is in me may be unable to go with laws, but it is never lawless.'

Mr. Wright was buried April 12 at Unity Chapel, near Talliesin East. The Rev. Max Gaebler, minister of the Madison, Wisconsin, church, which Mr. Wright designed and of which he was a member, conducted services. 'A great man, a great architect, but more than that a beloved husband, father and friend', Mr. Gaebler said in eulogy.

From 'The Unitarian Register'

Have we forgotten Tom Paine?

One hundred and fifty years ago a lonely and neglected old man died in New York. He was 72 years of age. There was nothing about his appearance or the abject poverty of his surroundings to indicate that he was anything but a vagabond. Yet he was a great Englishman — a towering figure among the giants of the 18th century.

Tom Paine was born at Thetford in 1737, of good English stock. He received what we like to call a liberal education and at an early age became embroiled in the religious and political controversies of his time.

Paine went to America in 1774 and fought with the colonists. There he published 'Common Sense' an influential republican pamphlet. He most certainly prepared the first draft of the 'American Declaration of Independence' which Thomas Jefferson presented to the First Congress.

Tom Paine was an advocate of Deism — belief in the existence of a god without accepting revelation. He believed in and advocated freedom of thought and liberty to worship at any shrine. He was not an atheist — though he was frequently so called by his enemies — as was Voltaire. His beliefs were set out in 'The Age of Reason' published in 1793. For a hundred years it was the handbook of freedom-loving people on both sides of the Atlantic.

From 'The Inquirer' (abridged)